

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECDEF WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 9705

CSAF WASHDC

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2287

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CSAF PASS LGF - GENERAL PRICE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS MY US

SUBJ: SUPPLY SUPPORT PRIORITIES - 5-5E MALAYSIA

1. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THE MALAYSIAN F-5E PROGRAM HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A FORCE ACTIVITY DESIGNATOR OF V (ROMAN FIVE), WHICH I UNDERSTAND IS NORMALLY ASSIGNED TO ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT UNITS AS CONTRACTED WITH FAD III (ROMAN THREE) WHICH APPLIES TO COMBAT-READY FIGHTER UNITS OVERSEAS. ACCORDING TO OUR DAO, FAD V CARRIES WITH IT AN EXTREMELY LONG LEAD TIME FOR PARTS -- ON WORST CASE BASIS AS LONG AS 145 DAYS FROM VENDOR/DEPOT TO RECIPIENT SQUADRON. THE MALAYSIANS ARE AWARE OF THIS DIFFERENCE AND CLAIM THAT THEY WERE PROMISED FAD III STATUS WHEN THE F-5E AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED.

2. THE MALAYSIAN F-5 CONTRACT WAS WON AFTER STRENUOUS COMPETITION WITH THE FRENCH MIRAGE AND ON THE BASIS THAT IT WAS THE BEST AIRCRAFT FOR THE PRICE, BACKED BY A PROMISE OF VENDOR AND USAF COOPERATION IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE SUPPORT. OUR FILES DO NOT ESTABLISH CONCLUSIVELY WHAT DESIGNATOR WAS PROMISED, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT NO AIRFORCE DEPENDING ON F-5E'S AS ITS PRIMARY AIR DEFENSE

SYSTEM COULD HAVE ACCEPTED THE AIRCRAFT WITH A POSSIBLE FOUR MONTHS LEAD TIME ON SPARE PARTS. THERE IS THEREFORE IN OUR ACTION OF ASSIGNING A FAD ROMAN FIVE A SERIOUS IMPLICATION OF BAD FAITH. OUR GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WITH MALAYSIA ARE RELATIVELY LIMITED, AND THE AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE F-5E'S THEREFORE TAKES ON EXTRA IMPORTANCE IN SHAPING GOM GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. OUR DECISION TO DEGRADE OUR SUPPORT OF THESE AIRCRAFT COULD HAVE A SERIOUS ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE WHOLE FRAME OF OUR RELATIONS.

3. SINCE THE CONTRACT, MALAYSIA HAS CHOSEN A NUMBER OF U.S., AS CONTRASTED WITH COMMONWEALTH OR CONTINENTAL, WEAPONS SYSTEMS INCLUDING C-130'S, HELICOPTERS, ARMORED CARS AND IT APPEARS THEY WILL ABANDON THE H&E ASSAULT RIFLE FOR THE COLE M-16 SHORTLY. I AM CONCERNED THAT OUR FAILURE TO ACCOMMODATE THE MALAYSIANS ON RAPID SUPPLY OF SPARES FOR THE F-5 WILL UNDERMINE OUR OVERALL CREDIBILITY AS A SUPPLIER OF ARMAMENTS. I AM ALSO CONCERNED THAT THE ASSIGNMENT OF A LOW DESIGNATOR BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGNAL OF OUR WANING INTEREST IN MALAYSIA'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE FOR ITS OWN DEFENSE THEREBY ENCOURAGING THOSE IN THE GOM WHO WOULD PREFER TO DEAL WITH EUROPE AND THE ARABS. MALAYSIAN DISSATISFACTION ALSO COULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS IN REGIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMERCIAL PURCHASES OF U.S. WEAPONS SYSTEMS. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE ACTION TO UPGRADE THE MALAYSIAN FAD TO THE III LEVEL.
UNDERHILL

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